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**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**  
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

**TESTIMONY**

**Wednesday, February 27, 2013**

**Proposed Bill No. 6157 – An act concerning personally identifying information on certifications of marriage and death**

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and other members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Aileen Nosal and I serve as an Assistant Town Clerk, and Assistant Registrar of Vital Statistics for the Town of Newtown.

I am testifying today in support of the proposed Bill 6157 An Act Concerning Personally Identifying Information on Certifications of Marriage and Death, as well as similar legislation in Bills 5733, and 5421 which I spoke on last week.

The events of December 14<sup>th</sup> shed light on the wide accessibility to all vital records – especially death and marriage certificates - available to the public. As discussed in other testimonies, there is information on a death record that no one needs except immediate family and other individuals/entities specified in law. In a day when identity theft is much too common, I want to stress the importance of protecting these records by not releasing them to the general public.

It was recently brought to my attention that the State of Connecticut is one of the few states left who has such an open policy on vital records. I did my own research and was pleasantly surprised to see that most States already have laws similar to the one proposed in Bill 6157. I have attached to my testimony a brief chart showing a few states across the country and their policy on public access to death certificates.

The proposed bill suggests amending the statute to ensure that certain information is not included on a certificate of marriage or death when requested by individuals other than the specified parties in order to protect against identity theft and to provide confidentiality while ensuring appropriate public access. I support the amended language of the bill as suggested by the Town Clerk's Association. However, I would like to stress the importance of who the bill says we shall issue a certificate to. It is not our intention to prevent necessary parties from acquiring information they need, however it is important to not give anyone access to this information that does not *need* it. I support this bill in relation to people of all ages – not just minors, as bill 5733 and 5421 recommend.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Aileen Nosal  
Assistant Town Clerk, Town of Newtown

**Who Is Eligible to Obtain A Certified Copy of A Death and Marriage Certificate?**

State	Death	Marriage
California	<p>"Obtained by the individual named on the record, parents of the individual named on the record and certain other individuals specified in law. All other requestors can only obtain informational copies."</p> <p><a href="http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/CertifiedCopiesofBirthDeathRecords.aspx">http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/CertifiedCopiesofBirthDeathRecords.aspx</a></p>	<p>"Only the two individuals named on the marriage certificate can obtain copies of confidential marriage records."</p> <p><a href="http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/CertifiedCopiesofMarriageandDivorceRecords.aspx">http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/CertifiedCopiesofMarriageandDivorceRecords.aspx</a></p>
New York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The spouse, parent, child or sibling of the deceased</li> <li>• Other persons who have a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ documented lawful right or claim</li> <li>○ documented medical need</li> <li>○ New York State Court Order</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/death.htm">http://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/death.htm</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The spouses</li> <li>• Other persons who have a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ documented judicial or other proper purpose</li> <li>○ New York State Court Order</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/marriage.htm">http://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/marriage.htm</a></p>
New Hampshire	<p>New Hampshire vital records are considered to be private, and access to them is restricted by statute to those individuals who have a "direct and tangible interest" in the record.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sos.nh.gov/vitalrecords/ACCESSRIGHTS.html">http://www.sos.nh.gov/vitalrecords/ACCESSRIGHTS.html</a></p>	<p>Same as access to a death certificate</p> <p><a href="http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/1/5-C/5-C-105.htm">http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/1/5-C/5-C-105.htm</a></p>
Rhode Island	<p>Vital records are confidential. Only individuals who have what is called a "direct and tangible interest" in the records can access them.</p> <p><a href="http://www.health.ri.gov/records/about/confidentiality/">http://www.health.ri.gov/records/about/confidentiality/</a></p>	<p>Same as access to a death certificate</p> <p><a href="http://www.health.ri.gov/records/about/confidentiality/">http://www.health.ri.gov/records/about/confidentiality/</a></p>